

Courts

Circuit Court

**General District
Court**

**Juvenile &
Domestic
Relations Court**

Magistrates

Courts

MISSION

The mission of the Courts is to serve the public through support of the judicial system of Loudoun County in providing an independent, accessible, responsive forum for the just resolution of disputes.

DESCRIPTION

The court system in Loudoun County is composed of the Circuit, Juvenile and Domestic Relations, General District Courts, and the Magistrates. The Circuit Court, the only trial court of record in the County, is the court of original and appellate jurisdiction and has three sitting judges. The Circuit Court is the only court exercising general jurisdiction over all matters both criminal and civil, including appeals from the district courts. The Juvenile and Domestic Relations (JDR) District Court provides the citizens of the community access to the legal system to resolve domestic disputes and adjudicate delinquent offenses. Its goal is to provide youth and families with the services needed to rehabilitate and protect the community. The General District Court Clerk's Office works as a team member with judges, law enforcement agencies, the Commonwealth Attorney's Office, attorneys and the public in an effort to provide accurate records and information and the issuance of legal documents in a timely manner. The Magistrate's Office is the point of entry for the court system. Magistrates provide 24 hr service to the public, law enforcement, and other agencies that need access to the Court. The Magistrates issue warrants of arrest, conduct bail bond hearings, commit offenders to jail and release prisoners from jail.

BUDGET OVERVIEW

Both the State Constitution and the Code of Virginia require the County to provide suitable facilities for the Courts and Magistrates, although the County is not required to provide any personnel or related expenses.

FY 07 Issues, Challenges & Trends:

- The Courts have experienced significant increases in caseload statistics as well as community demands to provide services.
- Recognizing the impact on the citizens' ability to access the Juvenile & Domestic Relations court system in a timely manner, a second full time judge has been approved effective July 1, 2005; insufficient clerical support is a major challenge.

FY 07 Major Goals:

- Provide effective access to the justice system, as required by law.
- Conclude all cases promptly and efficiently within the time periods advocated by the Supreme Court of Virginia.
- Effectively provide information to the public.
- Maintain human dignity and justice by ensuring equal application of the judicial process to all controversies.
- Implement the interagency drug court program.

FY 06 Major Achievements:

- Provide access to land records in the Circuit Court.
- Bring requested cases and manage dockets to the Courts in a timely and efficient manner.

Courts

Department Financial Summary

Departmental Financial Summary	FY 03 Actual	FY 04 Actual	FY 05 Actual	FY 06 Adopted	FY 07 Adopted
Expenditures					
Personnel	\$519,864	\$539,670	\$533,793	\$624,000	\$642,000
Operations & Maintenance	211,984	223,389	239,026	260,000	296,000
Capital Outlay	19,070	40,290	0	16,000	16,000
Total Expenditures:	\$750,918	\$803,349	\$772,819	\$900,000	\$954,000
Revenue					
Local Fees, Charges, Etc	\$127	\$3,552	\$24,439	\$0	\$0
Total Revenues:	\$127	\$3,552	\$24,439	\$0	\$0
Local Tax Funding:	\$750,791	\$799,797	\$748,380	\$900,000	\$954,000
FTE Summary:	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00

FY 07 Board Action: The FY 07 Adopted Fiscal Plan for the Courts provides services at the County Administrator's recommended level. The FY 07 budget also includes funding to support an additional judge in the General District Court and for implementation of compensation increases and increased benefits costs effective September 2006.

Additional information on this department's Capital Improvement Program projects can be found in Volume 2 on pages 480, 481, and 482. Information on scheduled projects for the Capital Asset Preservation Fund can be found in tables beginning on page 606 in Volume 2.

Courts

Expenditures by Program

Programs	FY 03 Actual	FY 04 Actual	FY 05 Actual	FY 06 Adopted	FY 07 Adopted
Circuit Court	\$499,048	\$520,243	\$496,788	\$569,000	\$587,000
General District Court	81,470	108,826	99,382	85,000	121,000
Juvenile & Domestic Relations	34,543	39,151	45,233	66,000	66,000
Magistrates	135,857	135,129	131,416	180,000	180,000
Total	\$750,918	\$803,349	\$772,819	\$900,000	\$954,000

Revenues by Program

Programs	FY 03 Actual	FY 04 Actual	FY 05 Actual	FY 06 Adopted	FY 07 Adopted
Circuit Court	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
General District Court	127	3,552	24,439	0	0
Juvenile & Domestic Relations	0	0	0	0	0
Magistrates	0	0	0	0	0
Total	\$127	\$3,552	\$24,439	\$0	\$0

Local Tax Funding by Program

Programs	FY 03 Actual	FY 04 Actual	FY 05 Actual	FY 06 Adopted	FY 07 Adopted
Circuit Court	\$499,048	\$520,243	\$496,788	\$569,000	\$587,000
General District Court	81,343	105,274	74,943	85,000	121,000
Juvenile & Domestic Relations	34,543	39,151	45,233	66,000	66,000
Magistrates	135,857	135,129	131,416	180,000	180,000
Total	\$750,791	\$799,797	\$748,380	\$900,000	\$954,000

Staffing by Program

Programs	FY 03 Actual	FY 04 Actual	FY 05 Actual	FY 06 Adopted	FY 07 Adopted
Circuit Court	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
General District Court	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Juvenile & Domestic Relations	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Magistrates	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00

Courts - Circuit Court

DESCRIPTION

The Circuit Court is the only trial court of general jurisdiction in Virginia. Jury trials are conducted in the Circuit Court. The Circuit Court is charged with the supervision of fiduciaries, the jury selection process, hearing administrative appeals, conducting medical malpractice panels, participating in annexation hearings, hearing election contests, and lawyer discipline. Overall responsibility for the oversight of the court facilities rests with the Circuit Court. Appointments to the Board of Equalization, Board of Zoning Appeals, Electoral Boards, and Magistrates are made by the Circuit Court. The Circuit Court also processes appointments of marriage celebrants, name changes, and applications for concealed weapons. The six administrative support positions for the Circuit Court are provided by the County. The Circuit Court Judges are elected by the Virginia General Assembly to preside over and administer the laws of the Commonwealth to the citizens of Loudoun County. The Circuit Court Judges are State employees. The County supplements State staffing allocations with local personnel.

BUDGET OVERVIEW

FY 07 Issues:

- Population growth has resulted in increased of civil and criminal case load.
- The nature of cases has become more complex, and complex cases demand increased time allocation.

FY 07 Challenges:

- Continue to provide the same judicious, prompt, and efficient handling of all cases in light of the increased number of cases and increased complexity with the same number of staff.
- With the increase in the civil and criminal cases, it is challenging to conclude cases within 12 months of filing.

Program Financial Summary	FY 03 Actual	FY 04 Actual	FY 05 Actual	FY 06 Adopted	FY 07 Adopted
Expenditures					
Personnel	\$401,682	\$422,632	\$414,778	\$470,000	\$488,000
Operations & Maintenance	97,366	97,611	82,010	99,000	99,000
Total Expenditures:	\$499,048	\$520,243	\$496,788	\$569,000	\$587,000
Revenue					
Local Fees, Charges, Etc	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Revenues:	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Local Tax Funding:	\$499,048	\$520,243	\$496,788	\$569,000	\$587,000
FTE Summary:	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00

Courts - Circuit Court

Planned Accomplishments/Objectives for FY 07

Goal: Maintain judicious, prompt, and efficient handling of cases.

Objective: Conclude all civil and criminal cases within same judicious, prompt, and efficient manner.

<i>Performance Measures</i>	Actual FY 04	Actual FY 05	Est. FY 06	Proj. FY 07
Number of commenced civil cases	2,733	2,767	3,036	3,188
Number of commenced criminal cases	1,695	1,648 ²	1,764	1,799
Cost per commenced civil and criminal cases ¹	\$117	\$113	\$119	\$113

¹Circuit Court office cost does not include Clerk of Circuit Court's office.

²FY 05 actual data consists of activity from January through September 2005, plus a projected estimate for October through December 2005 based on year-to-date activity. The figure could significantly rise in the last quarter as it did last year.

Courts - General District Court

DESCRIPTION

General District Courts are courts of limited jurisdiction. In addition to limited civil controversies designated by statute, the General District Court has jurisdiction to hear and decide civil cases where the amount of the controversy does not exceed \$15,000. Included are criminal, civil, traffic and mental hearings, arrests, community relations, community service programs, court dates, and general information in regard to each of these types of cases. Additionally, the General District Court processes all paperwork filed for service, courtroom paperwork, courtroom updates and issues many court processes required by law. Support staff is provided by the State. The staff of the General District Court is employed by the State, while the County funds the office's operating expenses.

BUDGET OVERVIEW

FY 07 Issues:

- Population increases have an effect on the General District Court with more traffic tickets, more civil and criminal cases, and residents seeking information.
- Cases are becoming more complex.
- Demographics of immigration are shifting the County towards more Spanish speaking residents.
- Misdemeanor crimes such as traffic are resulting in mass production of paperwork.

FY 07 Challenges:

- Meet the increasing needs of services and handle more complex cases with current staff.
- More qualified foreign language interpreters are required for court hearings.

Program Financial Summary	FY 03 Actual	FY 04 Actual	FY 05 Actual	FY 06 Adopted	FY 07 Adopted
Expenditures					
Personnel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Operations & Maintenance	62,400	68,536	99,382	75,000	111,000
Capital Outlay	19,070	40,290	0	10,000	10,000
Total Expenditures:	\$81,470	\$108,826	\$99,382	\$85,000	\$121,000
Revenue					
Local Fees, Charges, Etc	\$127	\$3,552	\$24,439	\$0	\$0
Total Revenues:	\$127	\$3,552	\$24,439	\$0	\$0
Local Tax Funding:	\$81,343	\$105,274	\$74,943	\$85,000	\$121,000
FTE Summary:	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Courts - General District Court

Planned Accomplishments/Objectives for FY 07

Goal: Ensure all court cases are resolved promptly and efficiently.

Objective: Process all court cases filed by attorneys, police agencies and the public.

<i>Performance Measures</i>	Actual FY 04	Actual FY 05	Est. FY 06	Proj. FY 07
Number of traffic cases concluded	49,069	53,128	54,600	57,330
Number of criminal cases concluded	6,488	7,006	7,140	7,497
Number of civil cases concluded	12,896	14,343	14,700	15,435

Goal: Provide information to members of the public.

Objective: Assist the public with questions by phone and in person.

<i>Performance Measures</i>	Actual FY 04	Actual FY 05	Est. FY 06	Proj. FY 07
Number of questions answered by phone calls per deputy clerk	43,177	61,206	63,000	66,150
Number of questions answered in person per deputy clerk	53,001	75,886	105,000	105,000
Number of information packets handed out	47,627	80,001	105,000	105,000

Courts - Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court

DESCRIPTION

The Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court's jurisdiction includes all juvenile traffic/delinquent offenses; adult criminal offenses committed against minors; domestic relations cases (both criminal and civil matters). Civil cases are processed through the Court Services Unit; attorneys may file civil pleadings concerning child custody, visitation, support and adoption directly with the Clerk's Office. Motions to amend or review existing Court Orders may also be filed by pro se litigants directly with the Office of the Clerk. It is the responsibility of the Clerk's Office to index, docket and prepare service of process all cases filed with the Court.

BUDGET OVERVIEW

FY 07 Issues:

- The Court has experienced significant increases in caseload statistics as well as community demands for services.
- Recognizing this impact on the citizens' ability to access the court system in a timely manner, a second full time judge was approved by the State effective July 1, 2005.
- Providing services to clients for whom English is a second or non-existent language.

FY 07 Challenges:

- The State did not provide clerical support staff for a second full time judge.
- Increased need for Spanish interpreters and forms written in Spanish.

Program Financial Summary	FY 03 Actual	FY 04 Actual	FY 05 Actual	FY 06 Adopted	FY 07 Adopted
Expenditures					
Personnel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Operations & Maintenance	34,543	39,151	45,233	60,000	60,000
Capital Outlay	0	0	0	6,000	6,000
Total Expenditures:	\$34,543	\$39,151	\$45,233	\$66,000	\$66,000
Revenue					
Local Fees, Charges, Etc	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Revenues:	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Local Tax Funding:	\$34,543	\$39,151	\$45,233	\$66,000	\$66,000
FTE Summary:	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Courts - Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court

Planned Accomplishments/Objectives for FY 07

Goal: Provide equitable access to the judicial system for Loudoun County residents.

Objective: Provide service to Loudoun County families.

<i>Performance Measures</i>	Actual FY 04	Actual FY 05	Est.. FY 06	Proj. FY 07
Number of Juvenile & Domestic Relations hearings held	18,529	19,455	21,401	22,471
Number of new Juvenile cases	3,796	4,380	5,256	5,518
Number of new Domestic Relations cases	2,684	3,531	4,237	4,448
Number of spouse abuse cases	667	700	735	771

Goal: Provide information to the Loudoun County residents.

Objective: Assist the public with questions.

<i>Performance Measures</i>	Actual FY 04	Actual FY 05	Est.. FY 06	Proj. FY 07
Number of questions answered by phone calls	36,000	37,800	37,800	39,690

Courts - Magistrates

DESCRIPTION

The Magistrate's Office is under the supervision of the Chief Circuit Court Judge and the Supreme Court of Virginia. The Magistrate's Office is the entry level of the court system. Magistrates conduct probable cause hearings, issue warrants, conduct bail hearings, commit offenders to jail and release prisoners from jail, issue emergency custody orders, temporary detention orders, medical emergency detention orders as well as emergency protective orders in domestic abuse and stalking cases. The Office is open 24 hours a day. The County funds the office's operating expenditures and pays the Magistrates a 50% match of their State salaries.

BUDGET OVERVIEW

FY 07 Issues:

- Loudoun County has the lowest ratio of magistrates to population of any locality in the State; Loudoun is at least two positions short.
- The Magistrate's Office is staffed by five full time magistrates and the Chief Magistrate, who also covers Fauquier and Rappahannock County.

FY 07 Challenges:

- Staffing shortages coupled with population growth and staffing increases in the Sheriff's Office adds tremendous stress to the Magistrates' office.
- It is challenging to cover for medical, personal, and vacation leaves. During staffing shortages, the Chief Magistrate has to cover the front line while other managerial duties are neglected or delayed.

Program Financial Summary	FY 03 Actual	FY 04 Actual	FY 05 Actual	FY 06 Adopted	FY 07 Adopted
Expenditures					
Personnel	\$118,183	\$116,860	\$119,015	\$154,000	\$154,000
Operations & Maintenance	17,674	18,269	12,401	26,000	26,000
Total Expenditures:	\$135,857	\$135,129	\$131,416	\$180,000	\$180,000
Revenue					
Local Fees, Charges, Etc	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Revenues:	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Local Tax Funding:	\$135,857	\$135,129	\$131,416	\$180,000	\$180,000
FTE Summary:	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Courts - Magistrates

Planned Accomplishments/Objectives for FY 07

Goal: Provide judicial services and accomplish statutory responsibilities on a twenty-four hour per day, 365 days per year basis.

Objective: Process transactions within twenty-four hours.

<i>Performance Measures</i>	Actual FY 04	Actual FY 05	Est. FY 06	Proj. FY 07
Total duty hours	10,372	10,372	10,372	10,372
Total Transactions requested	20,262	22,086	23,190	24,000
Total Processes issued	16,587	18,080	18,984	19,900
Total Processes issued per duty hours	1.60	1.74	1.83	1.92
Total Processes administered per Magistrate	3,317	3,616	3,797	3,928